FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
August 15, 2017

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Montana Coal Train Dumps
30 Cars of Coal near and into Clark Fork River

NOXON, MT - A westbound 120-car coal train derailed at approximately 11:00 pm on Sunday, August 13th about 10 miles west of Noxon, Montana. Thirty of the 120 uncovered rail cars, each fully loaded, dumped dirty and dangerous coal next to and into the Cabinet Gorge Reservoir of the Clark Fork River. There were no injuries. Crews are working to clean up the mess and hope to finish on Wednesday. The track is closed.

“Despite many track upgrades through Montana, coal trains still derail, and they still discharge their loads into our rivers and countryside when they crash,” said Beth Kaeding of Bozeman and a spokesperson for Northern Plains Resource Council. “Shipping coal to Asia comes with a high price that all of us must pay.”

“Clark Fork River has overcome decades worth of toxic pollution from mining activity to provide some of the best fly-fishing in the country,” said Shannon Williamson, Executive Director of Lake Pend Oreille Waterkeeper. “This incident is yet another reminder of what’s at risk when we transport tons of uncovered piles of dirty coal along environmentally sensitive water bodies. Why sacrifice our clean water when we’ve got better, cleaner options for powering our homes and businesses?”

“This derailment underscores why coal export proposals must be stopped. The proposed Millennium coal export terminal in Longview, Washington would add 16 more coal trains to railways in Inland and Pacific Northwest,” stated Regna Merritt, co-director of the Power Past Coal coalition. “It is fortunate that no injuries resulted from this coal train wreck but the impact to the spectacular Clark Fork River will be seen for years to come.”

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